

**EASTERN REGION/PRICE
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE
September 18, 2008 11:00 a.m.
Mammoth Room**

PRESENT:

Boni Seals, DCFS Community Service Manager
Heather Ogden, Carbon School District
Jeff Olinger, DWS
John Behn, Boy Scouts of America
Keri Larsen, Guardian Ad Litem
Kobi Marchello, Foster Care Foundation
Kyle Elder, Four Corner's Behavioral Health
Lisa Branch, Local Interagency Council
Lisa Shook, DCFS Intake
Rulinda Sanderson, Parent Advocate/Past DCFS Client

GUESTS:

Matt Watkins, Eastern Region Associate Director
George Taylor, Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group

EXCUSED:

Missy Hamilton, Bruin Point Elementary Principal
Patsy Buchmiller, Regional Healthcare Coordinator
Rhonda Peterson, Carbon County Fairgrounds
Shelley Wright, Children's Justice Center Manager

AWARD:

Boni presented John Behn a Community Partner Award. He's served on the QI Committee since it started and serves on the QIC team. He's supportive and offers positive ideas.

GUESTS:

George Taylor introduced himself and explained his role with the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group. He explained we're no longer monitored by the federal court, but Quality Improvement Committees will still play an active role with DCFS.

Matt is visiting our quality improvement committee to learn more about what we are doing, and to report on what goals they are working on in the Uintah Basin. We are both working on placement stability and recruitment of foster parents. They're looking for more homes that take teens and structured care. The child abuse referrals in the Uintah Basin have gone up considerably in the last 4 months. The oil field companies have brought in more population. The school class sizes have grown and they're overwhelmed. A lot of the new children just come from a different culture. Methamphetamine cases seem to have increased with the increased population of oil and gas workers. They've also discussed how the 4/10 plan is affecting their community. They've had one formal complaint, and no other concerns noted. They've gone to all the community partners and given them information on the new hours and

their home numbers in case they can't get the on-call worker. The Vernal office has been overwhelmed with referrals and they're working hard. Boni said we've also talked about placement stability and prevention; we're kind of combining the two.

U.A.'S AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE:

Boni had asked the committee in the last meeting to brainstorm ideas to decrease the cost of UA's. John said the only thing he could come up with was that we're running a lot of UA's without getting the results that are needed. Heather suggested if they get 4 clean UA's decrease the amount of tests we run to decrease the cost. Kyle also felt we should test them less. Rulinda feels clients should pay for their own UA's. If they can pay for drugs they can pay for UA's. Boni said it was a good point, but the clients are under the court system and it was dragging out the length of the case. Some of their bills were over \$500. Rulinda agreed we should test them less. Only test them once a month, but don't tell them that and tell them they could be tested at any time. Monitoring prescription drugs is another problem. Kobi said with some clients when you told them they wouldn't get their kids back until they got completely off the prescription drugs they were convinced. Rulinda said many people get off meth and go to the doctor to give them something else. It's just replacing one drug with another. She said you can be completely drug free. Kyle said holding the parents responsible is good. It's important that they know we're watching them, but we also need to make it cost effective. Usually those that are just interested in getting their children back move quicker and do what they're supposed to. When we get them the clients are typically unemployed. We work on that right away. Missy and Heather suggested the employers help with the drug testing issue. Missy asked if there was more of a support for employment. She thinks the intention is good. Boni suggested inviting Frank Peczuh to the next meeting. The Chamber of Commerce also has meetings with local business owners and maybe we could reach out to them. We could also ask the new Commissioner and Ann Mackiewicz. The Kiwanis's would be another group to ask. Missy thought the idea was good, but there just needed to be a little more thought behind it. Jeff felt our biggest obstacle is going to be the judicial system. Boni can talk to Judge Johansen. Boni has a lot of data that we catch less than 1%. Kobi said if we can show him we're testing 3 or 4 times a week and not catching them, it would be good information. Matt said we're not really helping them by testing them that often. Rulinda said people do figure out a pattern and play the odds. Matt said they generally have one person a month that has a dirty UA and that might be a prescription. Lisa said it's more important to teach them how to make the right decisions. Rulinda said if she called in on Monday and tested, she knew she'd be testing on Thursday also. She had time to use with two days to get clean. Rulinda feels it's a waste of money for us to pay for their UA's. Maybe Rulinda could talk to Judge Johansen with Boni. Keri said she likes the idea of the pilot program. Boni asked if we should invite a business person to the next meeting or go to the Kiwanis's. Missy suggested we do both. The next Kiwanis's meeting is October 2nd. Matt will get data on the Substance Abuse inventory. As we look at reducing the amount of UA's they do and they still don't have a job, it might be an indicator they're still using. John said an addict can do anything they want. Once they get their children back they go back to using. Kyle said there's always that chance and it's a natural phenomenon. Boni said last year we worked on recidivism mostly with the CPS cases. What we focus on really does make a difference. Kyle said the effort to not remove children has helped. John said we're in it to help people and we don't want to send them to their breaking point. Rulinda looks back on it now and she gets angry thinking that her tax money goes to testing a drug user. She thinks society

helps addicts too much to be able to get back on drugs again. She wouldn't have relapsed if she had to work harder. Kyle said when they're trying to change their idea of change and what the system expects is totally different. They live so far from what the standard is; change to them isn't the same and they get so frustrated. Lisa asked what we do to find out what the causes are. Rulinda said they need to be able to trust one person and know that you can tell them everything and they're going to help you change. Rulinda said it would be better than going into that room with 10 people (first family team meeting). Keri asked how you establish that one person. She tried to start a group. Kyle asked about the DCFS worker. Rulinda said there were a couple of them she trusted, but there were others she didn't. Matt asked about her thoughts of the first family team meeting. Rulinda said it bothered her. She would rather have gone to a one on one meeting with her worker. She wanted to talk about everything she'd been through. Boni asked if a pre-teaming meeting would be better. Boni explained people are different. Some you can tell them straight out and others can't process it.

PLACEMENT STABILITY:

Boni gave some handouts on how to recruit and develop resource families. She doesn't know if we have gotten to the point that we have the community believing that it's their concern, not just a DCFS concern. Our numbers of foster children are increasing again due to methamphetamine use. We're having the Immersion Experience October 14th. We're inviting foster parents and prospective foster parents. John asked about Respite. Kobi said they've reached out to friends and neighbors, but it just didn't work out. They cut the training in half. It's a good idea and worked for some; Provo would have success because of their numbers. It's hard to do reunification when you have children placed far away. The question was asked: How can we make the foster care experience a better and more rewarding experience? Kobi said they did a study that says Utah pays way below the adequate cost for child care. We pay .38 cents a mile where the federal rate says its .50 cents a mile. When Kobi had foster children she paid more out of her pocket than what she was getting from the state. Kyle said there's a lot of stress and little reward if you recruit foster parents and don't prepare them for what they're getting into. John said the issue is finding good foster parents, we know they're out there. Kyle said even good foster parents get burned out. John said the more people you recruit, the more chance you get of getting good foster parents. John suggested we have someone at CEU make a public relations piece that we could show. Kobi said they have an 18 minute video that the Foster Care Foundation is re-doing. It has a positive twist but they also talk about some of the difficulties. Boni pointed out that general awareness programs have little effect on recruitment. We could put a picture of a teenager on the media campaign, since we need homes for teenagers. Keri said she went to a training that said the main thing is self rewarding. Kyle said we need to recruit those that are motivated. Boni said we need to do a lot of pats on the back at the recruitment meeting. Heather suggested billboards and at one time they also had Rick Krompel put it on his electronic sign. Kyle suggested we put emphasis on acknowledging the foster parents. Maybe put it on the radio; foster parent of the month. We also have a recommendation to send creative intervention workers into the foster homes to work with the kids. Lisa was a foster parent for awhile and didn't feel it would have helped to get recognition. Kyle felt positive recognition goes a long way. We need to put it out there that it's a positive thing and they would be helping and providing a safe home; so many kids and so few foster parents. Lisa said it would've helped if she had someone to talk to that would make her feel better about the situation. But instead, she came to talk to someone and all she would do was hit a brick wall. Keri asked about a group vs.

a liaison. Lisa said it would depend. Kyle said a foster parent needs to feel supported so that after the bad experience is over, you still feel supported. John said sometimes advocates can be more successful than caseworkers. Jeff felt it would help that they know about the case, but they're not supporting any one side. Kyle said it's very important having the foster parent involved with the child's therapy. John suggested getting an ecclesiastical leader involved with the foster family. Boni said we build a support system around the bio family but not the foster family. Kyle suggested validation from the child to the foster parents. As a foster parent you get acknowledgement by knowing you've helped that child improve at something. When you place an infant sometimes the family turns on the foster family. Matt went to a foster parent recognition that was impressive and suggested we involve them in trainings. Boni suggested Kyle come in and train their foster care workers. A lot of the new workers aren't secure about how to handle certain situations. Boni said it takes a lot of practice and it's a skill to be able to talk to someone when they're angry. Boni said they'd look at the movie theatre idea and Kobi doing a radio spot.

Kyle will do the welcome at the Immersion Experience.

We tabled the Communications Workgroup to the next meeting in the interest of time.

Next meeting October 16th at 11:00.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.